

VZCZCXRO8827
OO RUEHBZ RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #1777 3411020
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 071020Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5493
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0063
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4409
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3653
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7161
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4750
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0989
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0993
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0757
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2966
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0629

UNCLAS RANGOON 001777

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KHIV](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: OPPOSITION WINS HEARTS ON WORLD AIDS DAY

11. SUMMARY: The National League for Democracy (NLD) and members of the 88 Generation Students (88GS) used World AIDS Day to show compassion and care for HIV/AIDS victims and their families and to help raise greater awareness among the public. The NLD honored over 100 HIV/AIDS health workers and HIV/AIDS patients at its Rangoon headquarters. 88GS volunteers distributed 400,000 HIV/AIDS awareness pamphlets to the public and donated food to AIDS sufferers in a Rangoon hospital. There were no reports that authorities tried to stop any of their activities. END SUMMARY.

12. Both the NLD and the 88GS members conducted HIV/AIDS activities for the public on World AIDS Day. The NLD has marked World AIDS Day for several years but this year's event drew many more participants. The NLD held an open house at its Rangoon headquarters to honor health workers who assist HIV/AIDS patients, joined by thirty HIV/AIDS patients and another seventy family members, double the number they anticipated. 88GS members told us younger NLD members pushed to conduct even more extensive HIV/AIDS awareness raising activities outside of the party headquarters, but the ever-cautious NLD Uncles insisted on restricting NLD activities to their Rangoon office.

13. 88GS members marked World AIDS Day for the first time, by photocopying over 400,000 HIV/AIDS awareness pamphlets and distributing them in markets, bus stations, and other public areas in Rangoon and its suburbs. The UNDP office also gave them additional pamphlets to distribute. The public willingly accepted the pamphlets, and 88GS reps told us that local authorities did not attempt to stop or question their volunteers.

14. Some 88GS members also visited Rangoon's Waybagi Hospital, a facility the Ministry of Health set aside to treat highly communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and avian influenza. Although the medical superintendent had previously assured the 88GS members they could visit AIDS patients, when they arrived, the senior physician would not let them meet the patients. Instead, the doctor accepted

their food packets and promised to deliver them.

¶15. 88GS members said that their colleagues also distributed HIV/AIDS awareness pamphlets at Chauk, Magway Division (central Burma). They reported that some people in town tore down their HIV/AIDS posters and questioned the volunteers. Although local authorities watched carefully, they did not intervene or arrest any of the activists.

¶16. COMMENT: The NLD and the 88GS members used World AIDS Day to demonstrate that their activities reach beyond political activism and include humanitarian concerns. In the midst of UNSC debate on Burma and the regime's efforts to discredit international reports on Burma's dangerous rate of HIV/AIDS infection, actions by the 88GS and NLD help demonstrate their concern for the lives of ordinary people and keep the spotlight on the regime's lack of health care support. END COMMENT.
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